

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

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AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY BONN PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY OSLO PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY ROME PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY ATHENS PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 1641

EXDIS

DEPT PASS TO SECRETARY'S PARTY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, NATO, PO

SUBJ: MEETING OF LOCAL NATO AMBASSADORS ON PORTUGUESE INTERNAL
SITUATION

1. LAST NIGHT I SUGGESTED TO UK AMBASSADOR THAT HE GET HIS
CANADIAN COLLEAGUE, WHO SENIOR HERE, TO CONVENE NATO AMBASSADORS
FOR GENERAL DISCUSSION. WE MET 11:30 LOCAL MARCH 23. ALL
COUNTRIES EXCEPT ICELAND AND PORTUGAL REPRESENTED. UK AMBASSADOR
LED DISCUSSION.

2. FIRST POINT WAS CABINET COMPOSITION. ALL AGREED
COMMUNISTS LIKELY TO GET TWO PORTFOLIOS, SOCIALISTS TWO, FELLOW
TRAVELLING MDP TWO, AND PPD TWO. THERE WAS SOME CONCERN COMMUNISTS
MIGHT SUCCEED IN FORCING OUT PPD. RIGHT NOW THIS SEEMS
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UNLIKELY, BUT AGREED IF PPD EASED OUT SOCIALISTS WILL PROBABLY

WITHDRAW. FRENCH AMBASSADOR HAD SAME INFORMATION WE HAVE ON PRESENT STAGE OF NEGOTIATIONS. VASCO GONCALVES IS STILL HAVING TROUBLE WITH THE SOCIALISTS. ACCORDING TO FRENCH AMBASSADOR, WHO CLOSE TO SOCIALISTS, SOCIALISTS HAD AGREED THAT SOARES WOULD BE MINISTER WITHOUT PORTFOLIO AND ZENHA WOULD BE SUBSTITUTED BY ANOTHER SOCIALIST, BUT SOCIALISTS WERE INSISTING THAT AGRICULTURE NOT GO TO A COMMUNIST. ALL ANTICIPATED THAT ADMINISTRATION (INTERIOR) WOULD GO TO MILITARY MAN.

3. BRITISH AMBASSOR SAID HE WANTED TO "ASK WHAT MIGHT SOUND LIKE NAIVE QUESTION, BUT DOES ANYBODY PRESENT THINK WE CAN INFLUENCE THE OUTCOME OF THE CABINET DELIBERATIONS." THE RESPONSE IN UNISON WAS AN EMPHATIC NO. SEVERAL SAID THAT WOULD BE A TOTALLY UNWARRANTED INTERFERENCE ON INTERNAL AFFAIRS. I SAID NOTHING, BUT FRENCH AMBASSADOR TURNED TO ME AND SAID "CAN YOU IMAGINE VASCO GONCALVES' REACTION TO THAT."

4. SEVERAL PRESENT POINTED OUT THAT NO MATTER WHAT THE COMPOSITION OF THE CABINET THE REAL POWER WAS WITH THE REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL. I SAID WE COULD DEBATE THAT ISSUE, BUT THE POINT FOR US TO CONSIDER IS THAT THE COMPOSITION OF THE GOVERNMENT WOULD BE GIVEN GREAT WEIGHT IN OUR RESPECTIVE COUNTRIES, PARTICULARLY BY OUR PARLIAMENTS AND OUR PRESS. SINCE ALL AGREED WITH THIS I SUGGESTED SOME DISCUSSION OF HOW WE MIGHT REACT TO NEW GOVERNMENT.

5. THE GENERAL TENOR WAS THAT WE MUST BE CAUTIOUS IN NOT SEEMING TO PRESSURE PORTUGUESE. I SAID I UNDERSTOOD THAT BUT IT SEEMED TO ME THAT AS PARTNERS IN ALLIANCE WITH PORTUGAL, WE HAD A RIGHT TO EXPRESS CONCERN ON CERTAIN SUBJECTS, SUCH AS THE FAILURE OF THE GOVERNMENT TO DO ANYTHING TO STOP ANTI-WESTERN PROPAGANDA AND THE NEED TO HOLD ELECTIONS IN AN ATMOSPHERE FREE OF INTIMIDATION AND VIOLENCE. ON THE FIRST POINT THEY AS MUCH AS TOLD ME I WAS ON MY OWN, ALTHOUGH I HAD JUSTIFIABLE CASE WHICH I SHOULD PRESS STRONGLY. ON THE SECOND I RECEIVED SUPPORT, PARTICULARLY FROM THE FRENCH AMBASSADOR WHO SAID HE INTENDED TO RAISE IN STRONGEST TERMS WITH NEW FOREIGN MINISTER DEPRIVATION OF CIVIL LIBERTIES IN PORTUGAL.

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6. I ALSO SAID WE HAD A RIGHT TO EXPLORE WITH NEW GOVERNMENT JUST WHAT ITS POLICIES WILL BE TOWARD NATO. I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT "REAFFIRMATION OF INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENTS" MEANT IN ATMOSPHERE IN PORTUGAL TODAY, AND THOUGHT IT A LEGITIMATE QUESTION FOR US TO ASK. THERE WAS AGREEMENT ON THIS POINT, AS WELL AS EXPRESSIONS OF CONCERN THAT THE POSSIBLE APPOINTMENT OF "THIRD WORLD" APOSTLE MELO ANTUNES AS FOREIGN MINISTER WOULD BE A DIRECT SLAP AT NATO. MOST FELT, HOWEVER, THAT IF ANTUNES BECOMES

FOREIGN MINISTER IT WOULD BE FOR REASONS OF DOMESTIC POLICIES. VASCO GONCALVES IS KNOWN TO CONSIDER ANTUNES A COMPETITOR, BUT ANTUNES HAS ENOUGH SUPPORT SO THAT THE ONLY WAY HE COULD BE BLOCKED FROM THE ECONOMIC PORTFOLIO IS TO BE GIVEN THE FOREIGN MINISTRY. THE POINT WAS MADE THAT GOP IS REALLY MUCH MORE CONCERNED WITH DOMESTIC PROBLEMS THAN FOREIGN RELATIONS AT THIS POINT.

7. IN TERMS OF TACTICS, ALL PRESENT THOUGHT THE INITIAL APPROACH BY NATO COUNTRIES SHOULD BE TO THE NEW FOREIGN MINISTER. THE GENERAL VIEW WAS THAT A COLLECTIVE APPROACH WOULD BE CONSIDERED PRESSURE. I SAID I COULD APPRECIATE THIS BUT ONCE AGAIN WE HAD A LEGITIMATE INTEREST IN KNOWING GOP INTENTIONS TOWARD NATO; COULD WE NOT LEAST ASK THE NEW FOREIGN MINISTER FOR A BRIEFING AND THEN FOLLOW-UP WITH INDIVIDUAL DEMARCHES ON SPECIFIC POINTS WE WISHED TO MAKE. THIS MET WITH SOME SUPPORT BUT WE ALL AGREED WE SHOULD AWAIT THE OUTCOME OF BRUSSELS DELIBERATIONS AND POSSIBLE INSTRUCTION FROM OUR FOREIGN OFFICE BEFORE TAKING ANY ACTION. I SUGGESTED MEETING AGAIN AFTER GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCED.

8. COMMENT: JUDGING BY THIS DISCUSSION I THINK WE CAN GET SUPPORT FROM RESIDENT AMBASSADORS FOR APPROACHES TO GOP IF WE CHOSE OUR SUBJECTS WELL. COLLECTIVE BRIEFING SEEMS TO BE A REAL POSSIBILITY AND WOULD AT LEAST DEMONSTRATE OUR UNIFIED INTEREST AND PUT GOP ON RECORD. MANY WOULD THEN BE WILLING TO PROCEED FURTHER ON AN INDIVIDUAL BASIS.
CARLUCCI

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED SECRETARY'S PARTY.

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